

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAM-01 SAB-01 IO-11 AID-05 ACDA-05 SCCT-01

TRSE-00 /084 W

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R 260600Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 354

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 1389

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR IS JO SY

SUBJ: MFA OFFICIAL ON JORDANIAN-SYRIAN RELATIONSHIP

REF: TEL AVIV 1285

1. IN DISCUSSION FEB 23, DIRECTOR MFA MIDDLE EAST DIVISION (VERED) COMMENTED ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN SYRIAN-JORDANIAN RELATIONSHIP. LIKE EVRON (REFTEL), SHE OBSERVED THAT CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WAS BOTH IMPRESSIVE AND INDICATIVE OF THE NEED FELT BY BOTH ASAD AND HUSSEIN TO SHOW THAT THEIR RAPPROCHEMENT HAS REAL MEANING. SHE OBSERVED THAT THE NEED TO SHOW TANGIBLE BENEFITS WAS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT FOR ASAD, WHO WAS RECEIVING CERTAIN AMOUNT OF OPPOSITION FROM HARD-LINE BAATHISTS FOR CATERING TO REACTIONARY REGIME.

2. COMMENTING SPECIFICALLY ON JOINT STATEMENT OF FEB 18, VERED FELT IT WAS POSSIBLE TO MISREAD FACT THAT MILITARY COOPERATION WAS NOT MENTIONED AND THAT MILITARY LEADERS WERE NOT INCLUDED
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IN DELEGATIONS. WHILE AWARE THAT THIS IS MOST PROBLEMATICAL

ASPECT OF RELATIONSHIP FOR HUSSEIN, SHE POINTED OUT THAT JOINT MILITARY ACTIVITY NEVERTHELESS COULD PROCEED APACE WITHOUT BEING ADVERTISED IN PUBLIC DOCUMENTS. ON SUBJECT OF COORDINATING OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS, SHE BELIEVED THIS REFERRED MORE TO SHARING CONSULAR AND COMMERCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES THAN TO POLITICAL REPRESENTATION. SHE NEVERTHELESS SAW THIS AS ONE OF THE MORE CONCRETE, AND THEREFORE SIGNIFICANT, RESULTS OF THE NEW RELATIONSHIP.

3. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE, VERED EXPRESSED CONCERN AT THE POSSIBLE EVOLUTION OF AN INCREASINGLY CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JORDAN AND SYRIA, ONE IN WHICH JORDAN HAS THE GREATER STAKE IN ITS CONTINUATION BUT IS IN EFFECT THE JUNIOR PARTNER. WHILE SYRIA'S NEED FOR JORDANIAN SUPPORT IS TEMPORARY EXPEDIENT TO PROVIDE COUNTERWEIGHT TO EGYPT WITHIN ARAB WORLD, HUSSEIN WILL FIND IT MORE DIFFICULT TO BREAK UP THE RELATIONSHIP THE MORE DEEPLY HE BECOMES INVOLVED. SHOULD SYRIAN INFLUENCE IN ARAB POLITICAL LIFE REMAIN AT ITS CURRENTLY HIGH LEVEL, SHE COULD FORSEE THE DAY WHEN "THE HASHEMITE FURIT WOULD DROP INTO SYRIA'S LAP". OF GREATEST CONCERN TO VERED IS THE CONTINUING SYRIAN LEVERAGE OVER JORDAN REPRESENTED BY SYRIA'S ABILITY TO MANIPULATE THE PLO, AS BORNE OUT BY EVENTS IN LEBANON. IN HER VIEW, WHILE SYRIAN/PLO RELATIONS WILL EBB AND FLOW WITH EVENTS, SYRIA WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE GREAT INFLUENCE OVER THE PLO BY VIRTUE OF THE NEW RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO IN LEBANON IN ADDITION TO THE MAJOR ROLE WHICH SAIQA PLAYS WITHIN THE PLO.

4. COMMENT: IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT FROM AN ISRAELI VIEWPOINT THE NEGATIVE POSSIBILITIES (E.G., TROUBLE FOR JORDAN) IN ANY JORDAN-SYRIA-PLO RELATIONSHIP SHOULD BE HIGHLIGHTED, WITH THE POSSIBLE MODERATING INFLUENCE ON SYRIA AND THE PLO LARGELY OVERLOOKED. THE TRADITIONAL ISRAELI WORST-CASE ASSESSMENT OF MATTERS INVOLVING SYRIA HAS BEEN REINFORCED BY SYRIA'S DIPLOMATIC SUCCESS IN LEBANON AND THE SOLIDIFICATION OF ITS RELATIONS WITH JORDAN.
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